

# MECHANICAL MEMORIES MAGAZINE

ISSUE 63

FEB. 2012



*The only UK magazine dedicated to vintage coin-operated amusement machines*

# Mechanical Memories Magazine

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**Published by: Antique Automatic Amusements**

**Editor: Jerry Chattenton**

10 Bedford Road  
Dartford DA1 1SR

☎ 07710 285360

e-mail [jerry.mmm@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:jerry.mmm@tiscali.co.uk)

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# Editorial

Hello, and here we are late again, with the February magazine. Now I know you all look forward to my excuses, so here's one I haven't used for some time: school holidays. Having been closed at Brighton since before Christmas, I had tons of work to get done at the arcade in order to be ready to open for the half term week; unfortunately, I got the dates wrong. Consequently, the week the magazine should have been finished, printed and in the post turned out to be half term. So there was a frantic rush to get ready to open at Brighton, and that's why we're late again. I'll try to get the March issue out earlier.

Now, have you ever thought it would be nice to keep all your MMMs in smart magazine binders? The magazine has now been going for nearly six years, so all those issues are mounting up. I did look into having binders produced some time ago, but didn't get very far with it, not least because it would have been one more thing to take up my very limited time. However, Brian King has now come to the rescue and has very kindly offered to have binders produced and run the entire enterprise (thus leaving me free to get the magazine out on time each month)! See page 21 for details, and do let Brian have some feedback as early as possible; he has made a very generous offer, and one that is not likely to be repeated by anyone else.

And finally, it's been some time since my last plea for articles and material for the magazine. Do please write something for the magazine if you can; it doesn't need to be really technical, or even particularly well written (I'll edit where necessary), but all contributions will be gratefully received.

Well, that's just about it for now

Until next time, all the best

*Jerry*

# Dreamland

## MARGATE

### **Save Dreamland Update February 2011**

I'm sure very few people will have failed to notice that the Public Inquiry into Thanet District Council's proposed Compulsory Purchase of the Dreamland site from current owners, Margate Town Centre Regeneration Company, is now underway. If successful, Thanet District Council will lease the amusement park site to the Dreamland Trust to allow us to build our amusement park of historic rides.

Proceedings began on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2012 and were scheduled to finish on 25<sup>th</sup> January. The Inquiry has had a large amount of evidence to hear and, as a result, is taking longer than anticipated. The Inquiry will resume at 2pm on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> February, when Jonathan Bryant, our former Project Director, will give evidence. He will be followed by TDC's Heritage Development Advisor, Nick Dermott and consultant Simon Davis from Urban Delivery on Thursday 16 February. Ian Peck, of property consultant Bidwells will then give evidence on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> February. The Inquiry will resume again on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> March when TDC's Planning Projects Manager, Ashley Hills will give evidence. On Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> March, I will finally give evidence as the final witness.

The Planning Inspector's recommendations will be issued to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, who will issue a decision later in the year. In the meantime the Dreamland Trust continues working toward a 2013 opening of Stage One.

### **The Dreamland Archive**

Toward the end of last year our Board Member and Director of the archive, Mandy Wilkins, made an extraordinary discovery. Mandy writes:

"I recently received a phone call from a builder working at a friend's house in Sandwich who wanted to know if I would be interested in looking at a fibreglass mould that he had found in his garden in Kingsdown. I became very interested when he told me that he thought it was from Dreamland. When I went over the next day I was amazed to discover it was the original mould of the 'clown' faces used c.1960s at Dreamland and was delighted when he agreed to give it to the Dreamland Trust.

This wonderful find (which has spent the last several decades as a pond liner) is under safe keeping at my friend's barn awaiting the time when it can be returned to its original purpose!"

## **Physical works update**

Work to the Dreamland Cinema building is being carried out by Coombs (Canterbury) Ltd on behalf of Thanet District Council. The work started in May 2011, after a series of Urgent Works Notices were served on the owners of the building earlier that year. To date, the contractors have been re-pointing the building and carrying out structural repairs to the steel frame and concrete, and to the doors and windows.

Most of the roof coverings and some of the roof structure has also had to be replaced, due to its poor condition. The work is expected to be completed by spring 2012 and is being paid for by money that the council received in 2009 from the Sea Change Fund through the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Other work undertaken included the restoration of Dreamland's iconic illuminated sign on the 80ft Cinema fin. Each letter was taken down, stripped cleaned and re-lamped before being re-installed and switched on for the season's festivities.

Previously the lights operated on a circuit of five bulbs, so when a bulb expired 4 others would automatically cut out at the same time. The restoration work provided an opportunity to test alternatives including LED bulbs, which although dispensing of the five bulb circuit system problem have a very short life span, so there will be further investigation into what will work best for Dreamland.

## ***Nick Laister***

Chairman, The Dreamland Trust

Jan Leandro (Audience Development Officer)

[www.dreamlandmargate.com](http://www.dreamlandmargate.com)  
[www.savedreamland.co.uk](http://www.savedreamland.co.uk)



# Butlin's: 75 Years of Fun

by Sylvia Endacott and Shirley Lewis

After successfully developing a series of funfairs, Billy Butlin progressed to opening holiday centres and hotels across the UK to provide families with an inexpensive but entertaining holiday. Over the years these centres first expanded and then declined in number due to changes in our preferences for types of holiday. Now boasting spa hotels, the resorts are very different from the chalets of yesteryear. However, the original slogan 'Our True Intent is all for Your Delight' is fondly remembered by all of the original holidaymakers, whether they enjoyed one trip to a holiday centre or still make an annual pilgrimage with their families.

This nostalgic selection of images, many published here for the first time, illustrates the history of the various camps and hotels, including all of the things we associate with this most British of establishments. From Redcoats to water worlds, and from the Glamorous Grandmothers competitions to National Talent contests, this book provides an enjoyable and nostalgic trip down memory lane for all who know and love Butlin's, allowing us a glimpse into the social history of this quintessential British holiday.

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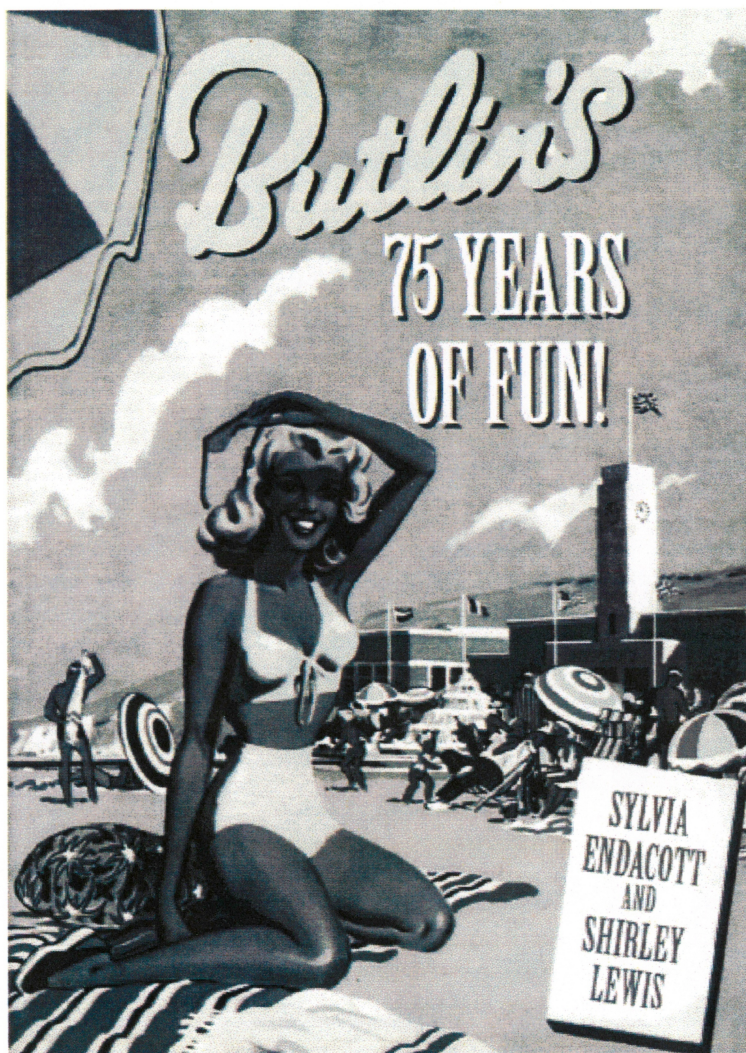
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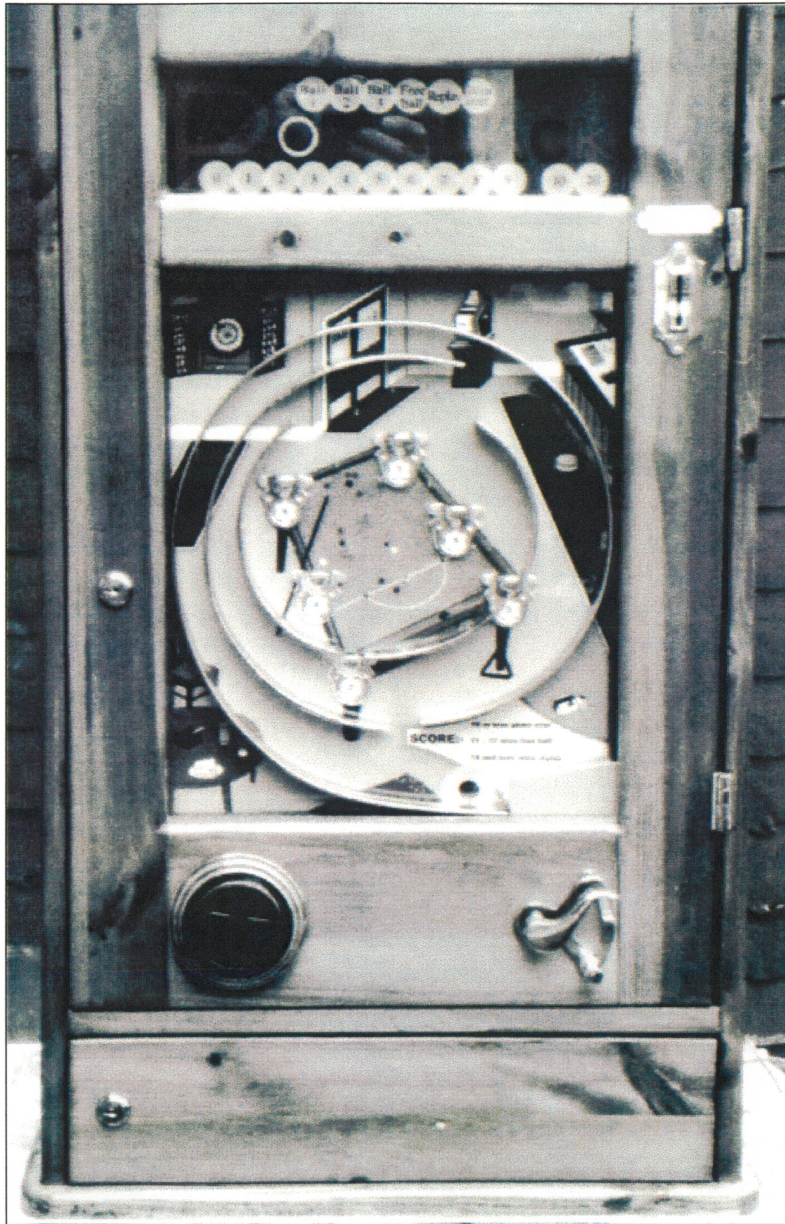
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# Meet Pot Black

By Richard Brewerton

I must be getting tight in my old age. I like to look for cheaper machines in need of restoration, but I really do object to paying hundreds of pounds for a half eaten, rotten box with a few bits of rusty metal clinging to the front door. Fair enough, if it's an elderly machine of some historical interest and value, then it's worth all the cost, time and effort, but for the average allwin, I don't think so.

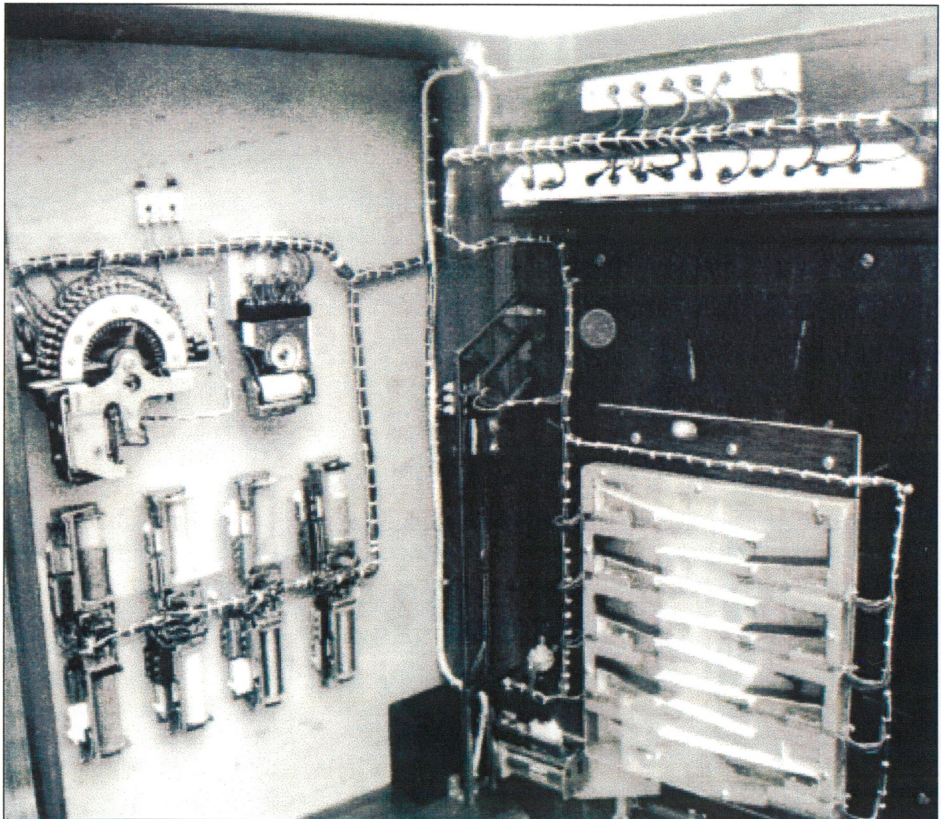
With this in mind, last year I found myself with no suitable machine to work on, so I began formulating thoughts about building my own machine. It's taken me a lot longer than I first imagined, from initial ideas through design, planning, artwork, building and problem solving, but at last here it is.....**Pot Black**. Obviously so called because it's based on a snooker theme. It is an allwin style game in an allwin style cabinet with six cups positioned over the pockets of a snooker table. The internals are electro-mechanical, with relays and uniselectors to detect coin insertion, count score and number of balls played, then award a free ball or replay as appropriate.

One of my first plans to fall by the wayside was the provision of a payout solenoid. A ready made one from a donor machine never came my way, so I tried experimenting with an old unisector magnet. In the end I gave up on that idea and decided to award a replay for a high score. Perhaps I'll go back to it another day.

The relays and uniselectors, all sourced on ebay, are fairly simple and low tech. for two reasons: firstly, it's more in keeping for a machine of this style, and secondly, low tech. is the only tech. I know. The cabinet came first, made to the Whales style and dimensions and stained in Georgian oak. The snooker theme came to me just because there happened to be a snooker tournament on the television at that time, and the idea of firing a ball around the track into one of the pockets was easy.

The backflash, which depicts a bar scene, was drawn by hand and scanned, then coloured-in using PhotoShop. Staples enlarged and laminated it. The bar appears to be empty for one very good reason – I can't draw people. But there has been some recent activity. Half a glass of beer and a part eaten sandwich have been left on the table whilst Mick and Dave have enjoyed a game of darts – Mick being soundly beaten. A Sega bandit looks on from the side wall, and this must be pre-smoking days judging by the ashtrays adorning the bar and table top. The pockets on the snooker table score 7 at the top down to 2 at the bottom. There is no lose, so 2 is the minimum score. The topflash is illuminated and displays the Pot Black name and scoring lights. These step along in a similar fashion to a snooker core board.

At first, the display illuminates 'game over' plus the previous score. A penny inserted operates a spring contact to operate a relay which resets the game. The score is reset to zero, play ball 1 is lit and the ball is released into play. This is achieved by operating a relay to which I have attached a lever which when released blocks the ball, and when operated allows it to run through to the playfield. I have wired it such that the ball is allowed to run through for play three times, after which a score of 10 or less is game over, a score of 11 to 17 wins a free ball and a score of 18 or more wins a replay. These score levels are set so that every ball is worth playing, i.e. if the first two balls score the minimum of 4 it is still possible with ball 3 to score 7 and thus win a free ball. Likewise, with a score of 11 it's still worth playing the free ball and maybe win a replay.



*The very well designed inner-workings of Richard's Pot Black machine.  
Note the clever zigzag score-counter on the rear of the door.*



So imagine the first ball is played. A selection of strategically placed pins in the playfield encourage the ball towards the higher scoring pockets to make the game more interesting. It then runs through into the machine to the part that caused me more problems than anything else: the score counter. I wanted a low tech. system of counting the score which was reliable; and that proved to be a bit of a problem. My first plan was to have the ball run down a sloping runway between two copper strips with insulated and non-insulated sections. The idea being that as it went it would alternately operate a relay; the higher up the runway that it entered, the more pulses created. However, it didn't work as the ball didn't make a very good contact, especially once things got a bit oxidised. The mark II version involved a zigzag course with the ball running down over a series of levers, each of which was sitting on a spring contact. This worked better but required some fine-tuning. I found that the ball tended to bounce as it changed from zig to zag and this caused a flutter on the spring contacts. The provision of judicial cushioning in the form of sticky-backed felt stuck on the levers slowed the ball speed and eliminated the bounce, so success at last.

There are six contacts, one for each pocket, plus an additional contact at the bottom to count the end of play of each ball. After scoring the first ball, the ball counter registers its end of play and steps the display on to play ball 2. The ball release relay is being held operated at this time, allowing the ball to run through for a second shot. At the end of play of ball 3, the score is checked and it's either game over, free ball or replay. A replay is also signalled by a buzzer which sounds for one second. The big replay button is normally a foot-operated tattoo switch but fits the bill, and I guess if times are hard I could always open my own tattoo parlour.

Although there were times when I felt like chucking it all in the bin and taking up fishing, I'm glad I saw it through to the end. I didn't keep any financial records but don't believe that I spent that much altogether. The finished machine sits well with the others in my small collection, which was the object of it all in the first place.

***Richard Brewerton***



# Letters to the Editor

Dear Jerry

Just a short note to wish you a happy Christmas and New Year and to say how very much I enjoyed your auction in Coventry in November. My wife and I had a thoroughly enjoyable day (yes, she really did enjoy it)! Although I've had an interest in machines for a few years now, this was my first auction as I haven't been able to attend the last couple of years. I thought it was a cracking venue and was very professionally run. Everyone seemed very friendly and I managed to chat to a couple of people, one I have contacted since, so hopefully I'm on my way to making some friends in slot land. I didn't manage to buy a machine, although I did buy a couple of very interesting books which I am thoroughly enjoying reading.

Just one question if I may? My small collection doesn't yet include an allwin, and this is something I would love to have. There was a great choice of allwins at the auction but my wife and I couldn't agree which one to go for. In the end, the one I chose sold for a bit more than I was expecting. Is there some sort of price guide for these things? I know I've still got a lot to learn, but it would be great if there was some sort of guide to give me and others like me a helping hand.

Once again, thanks for a great day.

*Alan Thornton*

Dear Alan

Glad you enjoyed the day, and sorry it's taken till February 2012 to publish your letter! This year's event is provisionally set for Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> Nov., so don't forget to mark your diary. As for a price guide, I'm afraid there is no such thing (for British machines at least), and if there were, I wouldn't recommend it! Prices achieved at our previous events are archived in the Arena on the pennymachines site, which you might find helpful. However, at the end of the day, it is what a machine is worth to you rather than what it is worth to someone else that is important.

There are many factors to consider when buying a machine, particularly in terms of condition. Some collectors prefer to pay top dollar for a nicely restored machine, whereas others prefer to pay less for a complete basket case and then enjoy the challenge of restoring it. Some prefer a machine in nice original, unrestored condition and are prepared to pay for it.

For others, how original a machine may be is of no importance, so long as it looks really smart and has nice shiny chrome.

All of this is a matter of preference, and to a considerable extent with regard to restoration, ability. I know several collectors who are so mechanically and practically inept that they wouldn't know one end of a screwdriver from the other end of a paintbrush, so it is unlikely they would take on a major restoration job. On the other hand, there are many who enjoy putting their practical skills to use, and for whom restoration is a major aspect of the hobby. All of this affects prices. If you were to auction a nicely restored machine to a room-full of committed restorers, you wouldn't expect the same interest that you would from a similar crowd with no practical skills between them.

So try not to be too concerned with values. With time, you'll get a feel for the sort of money you should expect to pay for a machine. Pay what you can afford and what that machine is worth to you. For the record, I think prices at our last auction were in general a little lower than we've come to expect in recent years, due no doubt to the general economic climate. The situation isn't likely to change in the near future, so now is probably a good time to buy.

*Jerry*

### **And whilst on the subject of the auction, here's what a few others had to say:**

Just a note to sincerely thank you and your colleagues for the extremely professional way you conducted the sale of my machines. – Brian Bates.

Thanks for another great auction, I think it went very well. Already looking forward to the next one, so no pressure!!! – Stuart Dale.

Thanks once again to you and Jeremy for organising another brilliant day. I really appreciate it. – Graham Millard.

Well done to you and the team on another great day. – Dave Lavender.

Well, another one over – I bet you're relieved. Another brilliant day to remember. Get cracking on the next one Jerry, I can't wait! – Colin White.

Just a quick email to say a personal thank you for the excellent auction that you organised. I thoroughly enjoyed the day and wish you all the best for future events.  
– Dave McGladdery

# Caption Competition

Well, many of you certainly rose to the challenge with your entries for last month's caption competition. Some of the captions are printed below and on the opposite page, although there were many more – there just wasn't room to squeeze them all in. Some were good, some not so good and some were totally unprintable! Anyway, the winner this time is Richard Brewerton with:

*Smoking is bad for you? But I don't smoke.*

Well done to Richard, who receives a free year's subscription. And thanks to all of you for your captions, which I am sure will raise a few smiles. The saucy seaside postcard is printed on the opposite page, with original caption.

You need to lose weight, that is clear, and you will soon be Miss Hotpants of the year.

Your weight is fine, and you are shortly in for a hot time!

You must lose weight it would appear, and beware of a pain in your rear.

"Dose my cigar tease you love?"

"Oh yes dear, puff away."

The sails on them yachts get smaller and smaller!

"The card says I'll be very rich and marry into royalty. Just think "King Edward" could be touching base with me very soon!"

You may soon receive an unexpected surprise.

"Oh no, one fart now and my new hat goes up in flames!"

These expensive cigars taste good, better than the crap I used to smoke.

Your weight is 9st 6lbs and you could be taking a short flight whilst on holiday.

Owner of nearby slot machine arcade causes havoc on Brighton pier.

Police reported that the young lady claimed to have been attacked, although no injury could be found.

I think I'll have a stroll down the pier and get myself a hotdog.

It's quiet here today. If things don't liven up soon I'll go and see Jerry.



I shouldn't smoke this really but there's nowhere to stub it out.

You have beautiful blue eyes, a gorgeous figure  
and your love life is going to hot up very soon!

Ah! That's where you park your bike!

You are about to be fired

The end is nigh

You may soon face a burning issue

Cigar Butt

Rear Action

Fortune cookie

Your burning desires are soon coming true

Man – "Take your shoes off, it will make all the difference."

Lady – "Do you really think so? What about my bikini?"



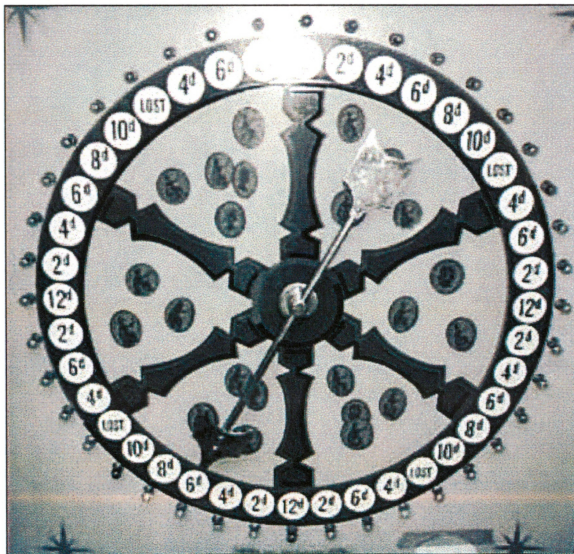
# Wheel of Fortune

## Part two

By Robert Rowland

One little incident happened in the Empire arcade in 1969, when a new attendant had started working there. We called him Ambrose, I don't know if that was his real name or a sort of nickname we had given him. He was a little chap who wore glasses, probably in his fifties. He knew that when we were in Empire, we mainly only played the Wheel of Fortune.

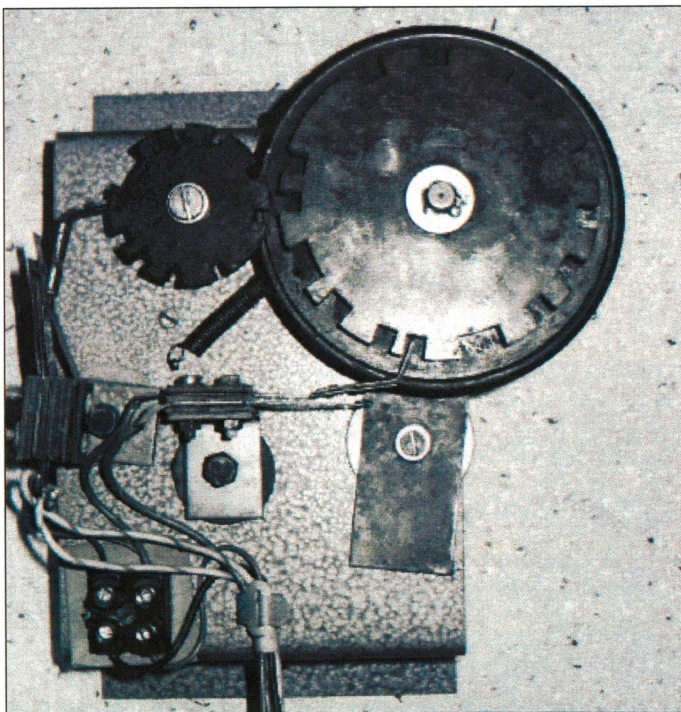
He had never said anything, but then one day as we walked in he approached us and said "you lads keep trying to work out a system on that Wheel over there, but you can't, as there is no system to any machine" (how wrong he was). While he was talking, I noticed the arrow had just stopped on the 4d win past the top twelve. Then the arrow displayed a fast start, so I rushed up and just got my penny in the bob (bet to win 12d). It came up, six clanks of the solenoid and twelve coins in the payout cup. Ambrose's face turned red, then he came up to me and said, "don't hang around that machine all say." Later on that week we took a few more bobs out, then one day as we entered the arcade we were informed by Ambrose that we could play any machine in the arcade except the Wheel of Fortune. That news had come from the big cheese himself, Fred the arcade owner of the Empire.





We had a couple of good summers making Wheel of Fortune pay, however, the next summer something went horribly wrong. Our loyal system just didn't work. The arrow was going round a lot longer than the usual maximum of six seconds. I found out from a good source that the machine had been fitted with a 'mixer'. This was a wheel with about ten notches cut into it, wired up to a contact. When this contact dropped into one of the notches, that then stopped the timer cam unit from running. Of course, the arrow still turned, but now instead of a maximum guaranteed cycle of six seconds, the arrow could go for double that time, which made a system impossible.

I don't know if the early models were missing a mixer, but I know for certain that one was added to the Wheel of Fortune in Bingoland, and after that others seemed to follow suit. Our little earner on Wheel of Fortune was over. Later models (like my own) clearly had a mixer built-in. Even after all this, we ventured up the road to Skegness and found some Wheel of Fortunes that we could still empty, yet others clearly had mixers fitted. Moving onto the early 1970s, there was still one Wheel of Fortune in town that we could do (that was in Queens Arcade), so I am not sure why some had mixers, yet other didn't.



*The mixer as fitted in later Wheel of Fortune machines, and apparently fitted retrospectively on some earlier models.*

The earlier models had a red arrow painted on the bottom front, with the arrow point finishing just above the payout cup. However, later models showed the arrow point inside the slightly larger payout cup. Another modification on the later models was a second row of micro-switches on the coin entries, each entry now having two switches, one above the other. If both micro switches were actuated together on any of the six coin entries, then an alarm bell would ring and the machine would not pay out. This would have stopped Ken's Formica strip trick back in 1965.

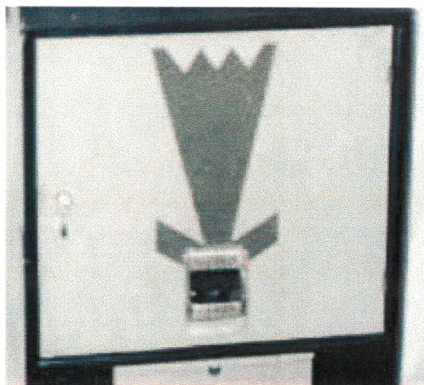
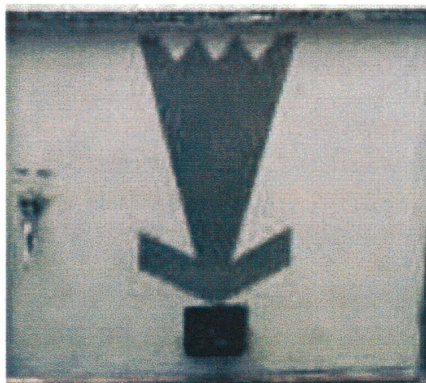
The last working Brenco Wheel of Fortune I ever saw was removed from Marine Pastimes in the late 1970s, and to this day I have not seen one in operation in any old or new amusement arcade. If any reader does know of one operating somewhere, please do let Jerry know and he can then inform me. (See footnote – Ed.)

I have posted a little home-made video on Youtube: *Brenco Wheel of Fortune system*. You will see that my predictions and area (spread of five) are pretty good, and unless you really knew, it would be near impossible to guess the correct area that the arrow would stop at in over say a ten play period. Various friends have visited me at home and not one could grasp the idea, despite my explanation – maybe you either get it or you don't.

My later Wheel of Fortune cost me £10 in 1975. I still have the cutting from the original for sale advertisement which appeared in the Worlds Fair Coinslot in 1975.

I hope you all enjoyed this two part article

***Robert Rowland***



*Arrow artwork on the earlier (left) and later (right) versions of Wheel of Fortune.*



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4 BALLY WHEEL OF FORTUNE	each	£60
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\* I believe there is a Wheel of Fortune operating on 2p play, at the Playbox arcade in Shanklin, on the Isle of Wight.

*Jerry*



# Word Search – British seaside resorts

by Stuart Dale

How many can you find?

Q	O	P	M	M	G	Q	E	N	R	U	O	B	T	S	A	E	Z	J	S
E	F	L	O	R	A	B	A	N	A	T	R	R	N	F	Q	J	C	T	U
T	K	T	O	V	E	X	U	L	L	T	R	L	D	M	M	L	X	D	S
A	Y	F	O	W	N	Q	W	M	V	X	I	O	F	Q	E	W	L	F	G
G	C	Q	N	C	E	H	H	G	B	C	K	M	P	E	L	Y	W	I	N
S	Q	M	S	Y	I	S	H	O	R	R	R	S	T	H	R	Z	P	L	I
M	G	F	Y	T	T	Q	T	O	V	O	I	H	S	Y	T	Q	Y	E	T
A	D	R	B	F	A	A	M	O	S	P	O	D	E	E	Q	U	M	Y	S
R	D	Y	C	D	E	E	T	Y	F	R	H	C	L	T	N	Y	O	Q	A
L	D	P	X	H	R	R	Y	S	P	T	H	D	J	I	A	G	H	S	H
X	K	P	C	P	J	X	S	E	E	F	L	G	G	S	N	G	E	F	M
C	D	O	B	T	D	R	S	N	H	R	A	L	V	W	H	G	R	K	H
R	N	O	T	H	G	I	R	B	U	E	P	W	A	G	G	R	T	A	S
C	T	F	J	B	L	A	C	K	P	O	O	L	J	N	E	S	W	O	M
G	R	Z	W	O	T	S	D	A	P	V	B	N	F	N	D	I	A	A	N
L	U	Y	A	U	Q	R	O	T	R	A	C	D	E	R	B	U	R	I	O
N	I	L	I	E	M	U	G	U	T	A	R	I	X	J	I	R	D	F	S
S	J	H	G	U	O	R	O	B	R	A	C	S	U	G	T	T	L	N	Y
Q	G	U	T	B	O	U	R	N	E	M	O	U	T	H	B	Y	J	O	O
L	K	D	V	V	V	M	G	N	G	Y	Q	H	I	R	E	Z	V	V	W

REDCAR	BOURNEMOUTH	CROMER
PADSTOW	SCARBOROUGH	TORQUAY
MARGATE	BRIDLINGTON	SKEGNESS
WHITBY	LOWESTOFT	FILEY
BRIGHTON	BLACKPOOL	HASTINGS
PRESTATYN	CLEETORPES	RAMSGATE
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# Mechanical Memories Magazine Binders?

*If like me you are one of the original subscribers to MMM you will by now have 63 issues of the magazine to store. I take pride in my magazines and try to look after them but this is no easy task and personally I am fed up of them falling over on the shelf every time I want to get something else. So with this in mind I approached Jerry to see if it was possible to have binders made for our magazines. We all know how busy Jerry is, so I offered to look into this and I have done so with Jerry's blessing.*

*I have found a company that will produce smart binders with gold lettering down the spine. They will add extra strings so we could have each binder to hold 20 issues. The cost of each binder would be approximately £6 with postage to be added.*

*So it's up to you – how many of you would be interested in purchasing binders if they were to be produced? The minimum for an order would be 50 but ideally it would be better to have 100 done. If you would be willing to purchase binders if I had them made would you please get in touch with ME either by phone or email and tell me how many you would want to buy in the first instance. If enough members come forward then I will have a batch made. I will keep you posted with any developments. Looking forward to hearing from you.*

**Brian King**

Tel. 01347 811532.

e-mail [Brian.P.King@btinternet.com](mailto:Brian.P.King@btinternet.com)

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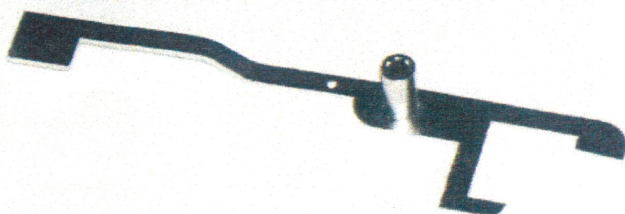
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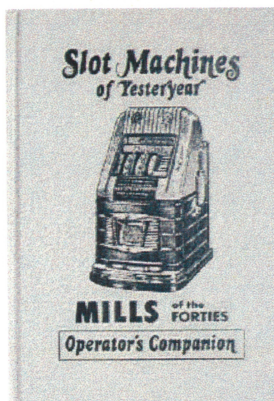
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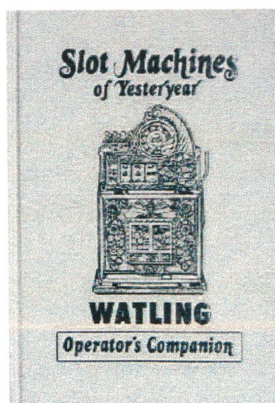
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